

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

SPEECH OF

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 13, 2015

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, first, let me thank Congresswoman ROBIN KELLY and Congressman DONALD PAYNE for hosting this important Special Order. I appreciate your leadership in organizing this important discussion.

I would also like to thank Chairman BUTTERFIELD and Assistant Leader CLYBURN for their continued leadership and dedication to fighting racism and racial bias.

Tonight's special order is particularly important because of recent high profile events that have forced our nation to reflect on race.

Our nation continues to grieve those lost in the terrible tragedy at Mother Emmanuel A.M.E. Church in Charleston, S.C. and my thoughts and prayer remain with their families.

In the wake of this senseless tragedy, Americans all over the country are asking: why do we still celebrate the Confederate battle flag? The confederate battle flag is a true symbol of hate and discrimination.

Late Wednesday night, as the South Carolina legislature debated bringing down the Confederate battle flag that had flown over its statehouse, Congressman KEN CALVERT, a Republican from California, introduced an amendment—in the dark of night—to allow for the sale and display of this symbol of hate in our national parks and federal cemeteries.

That's simply outrageous—this symbol of hate has no place at these federal landmarks. It's past time that we put away these symbols of hate and division.

It's past time that we confront America's long and dark history of racism and work to address the legacy of slavery, Jim Crow and institutional racism that continue to disadvantage too many African American families.

Now I grew up in El Paso, TX and I remember vividly Jim Crow. I remember the segregated schools and separate drinking fountains. I wasn't able to go to the Plaza Theatre with my white and Latino friends—because I was black.

Thankfully, those days of legal segregation have ended but in many ways, we know that segregation and the wounds of racism still persist.

And the Confederate battle flag is a symbol of that hate and racism. It is a symbol that only serves to divide us and that never should have existed.

From its conception, the confederate battle flag has represented white supremacy, and oppression.

In the words of William Thompson, the designer of the confederate battle flag, "As a people we are fighting to maintain the Heaven-ordained supremacy of the white man over the inferior or colored race. A white flag would stand fourth our southern cross, preserving in beautiful contrast the red white and blue"

He continues by saying ". . . it would soon take rank among the proudest ensigns of the nations, and be hailed by the civilized world as the White Man's Flag."

Mr. Speaker—I could not have put it more plainly.

This flag means hate—it always has and always will.

The intent for the confederate battle flag was to create a symbol that will remind the whole world of white supremacy, discrimination, and opposition to America.

It was also the banner under which millions fought against the preservation of our great union.

Under this flag, the Ku Klux Klan; a terrorist organization solely devoted to promoting hate and white supremacy, would unlawfully lynch blacks and burn churches to the ground.

Under this banner, lawmakers instituted laws that established and preserved segregation for generations.

And Dylann Roof looked to the flag as his guiding symbol that legitimized his actions: the murder of 9 peaceful parishioners looking to develop a deeper connection with God and their community.

Mr. Speaker—enough is enough. This symbol of hate has no place in our society—it's past time to take it down.

However, it is not enough to simply take it down. We must get serious about deconstructing the system that the Confederate battle flag represents—a system designed to close off economic opportunity for African Americans. It's past time that we get serious about ensuring liberty and justice for all.

To start, we must pass Congressman BENNIE THOMPSON's resolution to bring down the Confederate battle flag from our nation's Capital. This is a common sense step and I urge the House Administration Committee to quickly move on his legislation.

We can and must do more to put away hate and ensure justice for all.

We must start by creating good-paying jobs that are open to all Americans.

In my role as co-chair of the CBC Task Force on Poverty and the Economy and Chair of the Democratic Whip's Task Force on Poverty, Income Inequality, and Opportunity, I am proud to be working with more than 100 of my colleagues, to advance policies that give all Americans—a fair shot.

This work includes working to pass the Pathways out of Poverty Act (H.R. 2721), which I am proud to have introduced this Congress. This legislation is a comprehensive approach to address poverty in America that starts by creating good-paying jobs that empower families to build pathways out of poverty.

We also need to raise the minimum wage—and fight for a living wage because no one working full time should live in poverty.

To that end, I am proud to be a cosponsor of Congressman AL GREEN'S The Original Living Wage Act (H.R. 122) and Congressman SCOTT'S Raise the Wage Act (H.R. 2150) to

increase paychecks for families living on the edge.

We also need to fight against the disparities that persist in our health care system. The Affordable Care Act was a good start but more is needed.

For years, the Congressional tri-caucus has championed this effort by introducing The Health Equity and Accountability Act (HEAA). Congresswoman ROBIN KELLY will have the honor of introducing this important legislation this Congress and I am proud to co-lead this effort as co-chair of the CAPAC Health Task Force. This legislation builds on the Affordable Care Act and puts us on track to eliminate health disparities in our country.

Lastly, we need criminal justice reform. For too long we have ignored the systemic racial bias that's endemic in our criminal justice institutions and which has created an entire "missing generation" of black men.

That is why Congress should pass the bipartisan Stop Militarizing Law Enforcement Act (H.R. 1232), which I am a proud cosponsor of, to stop the militarization of our nation's police forces.

We need to pass the Police Accountability Act (H.R. 1102) and the Grand Jury Reform Act (H.R. 429) so we can ensure that deadly force cases are heard by a judge and there is more accountability among police officers.

Mr. Speaker—we have the legislation before us to start ending systemic poverty and injustice in America—let's call a vote and pass these bills.

It's time that we get serious about deconstructing the institutions that have oppressed millions and denied them and their families' opportunity to live the American dream.

But first, we must take down the Confederate battle flag—a symbol of those biased institutions.

A symbol of hate—

Of racism and

Of treason.

Mr. Speaker—it's past time to take it down.

RECOGNIZING THE TYLER JUNIOR COLLEGE APACHES' 2015 NJCAA DIVISION III WORLD SERIES CHAMPIONSHIP

HON. LOUIE GOHMERT

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 16, 2015

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, it is an extraordinary privilege of extending recognition to a team winning, not merely a state or conference championship, but a national title, not for the first time, but for the second year in a row. Once again, the Tyler Junior College Apaches Baseball Team has achieved national prominence by winning the 2015 NJCAA Division III World Series baseball tournament.

This back to back national title is the third national baseball championship title for Tyler

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